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# Modern SWISS PRINTS & Drawings

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THE ARTS COUNCIL
*of Great Britain*

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# FOREWORD

The revival of interest in the graphic arts (notably in lithography) is world-wide. The various processes are also attracting painters and draughtsmen as distinct from professional print-makers. The painter-graver, to use a word by which the French painters such as Bonnard and Toulouse-Lautrec were described at the beginning of the present century, is once again coming into his own. This exhibition illustrates the work of contemporary Swiss artists in this field, and has been provided by the Pro Helvetia Foundation. To Dr. Karl Naef, Secretary-General of the Foundation, and Dr. Erwin Gradmann, Curator of the Graphic Collection of the Eidgenossische Technische Hochschule at Zürich, who has written the introduction to this catalogue, our sincere thanks are due.

For the purposes of this exhibition a selection of the graphic work of Paul Klee is legitimately included, for he was born, grew up and died in Switzerland. The work of a number of artists is included who, although now dead, belong to the same generation as the other artists represented. A few drawings are shown in addition to the prints.

P. J.

# INTRODUCTION

The reputation of Swiss graphic art was already well established in Goethe's day (1749-1832). This was due to the fact that it had something to offer which was closely bound up with the land itself, and the desire to record its natural beauty. The demand by foreign tourists for records of the lovely sites which they had visited stimulated minor artists in many places, and resulted in a graphic art which, although popular and topographical, was nevertheless of high artistic quality. These artists aimed at conveying a direct impression of nature: but, since they were still influenced by the doctrines of Rousseau and Solomon Gessner, they romanticised their world, the scenery and the people. This was true of both French and German Switzerland which for the first time here presented a united front.

During the nineteenth century the rigid technique employed for what are known as 'vedute', and the requirements of romantic landscape painting had become a mechanical routine, but they were gradually replaced by later developments, which were largely inspired by new artists of more pronounced individuality and with a greater sense of form. The foundations of modern Swiss graphic art were to a great extent laid in the period just before Hodler by such artists as Stauffer-Bern, Welti, Vallotton and Edouard Vallet, although the traditions in which they worked go back earlier than the eighteenth century. They are apparent in Urs Graf's pen drawings, Holbein's sketches for book ornamentations, the book illustrations produced in the old town of Basle, and in Mathäus Merian's topographical works. Throughout there persisted, and this applies especially to German Switzerland, a feeling for craftsmanship, combined with a realism which reflects our national sobriety, and is tinged with pathos and sentimentality. How much these qualities are due to German or Italian influences cannot always be exactly determined. Swiss drawing, like Swiss art, cannot be reduced to a formula. Indeed it is not possible to speak of 'Swiss' art, because Switzerland is made up of many different races with different customs and cultures which, despite political unity, continue to assert their individuality. The graphic art of western Switzerland is more plastic, more elegant and often less complex. It apparently favours a subject set against a pictorial background, and a feeling for receding planes is enhanced by the choice of lithography as a working medium. The same tendencies

are shown by the artists of the Ticino, though they show a preference for woodcuts, a technique which suits their rustic subject matter. The German Swiss, on the other hand, are still strongly attached to their tradition of purely linear composition, and although the vivid line of Urs Graf has never been equalled, flashes of brilliance are still visible. Refining influences from the west have fused with the harsher German characteristics, with a consequent benefit.

This fusion of west European and German Swiss styles finds its clearest expression in commercial art, in posters which succeed both as advertising and as works of art. Since posters can be seen everywhere, they are generally studied and appreciated by the public. The art of drawing, however, has suffered from the competition of photography, and it survives mainly in book illustration, which has only a limited appeal.

Only a limited number of artists can be included in this exhibition, each represented by a few works. We can see, however, that craftsmanship, the essence of all graphic reproduction, still flourishes. Surbek of Berne is still master of the art of engraving, and Hunziker of Zürich has developed the acquatint process, and produced original zinc etchings which suit his individual style. The technique of zinc etching is not a new discovery, but it has been developed as an unrivalled method of artistic expression. This artistry is not always immediately apparent; it must be studied to be appreciated, and final judgments must lie with future generations. Conservative and progressive trends are all the time working side by side, usually to their mutual benefit. Realism, with here and there a dash of fantasy are the most persistent characteristics. Some artists who tend towards expressionism make use of contrasts of light and dark, and of a powerful modelling, which produce a strong emotional impact. Others employ symbols, or use their realism to evoke ideas and allusions. Abstract art, which is particularly suited to graphic art, satisfies a more cerebral appreciation, or tends towards symbolism according to the temperament of the artist. Related to abstract art, but differing from it by its naïveté and realism, is that form of expression, rich in pictorial images, employed by those artists who develop a childlike vision of the world.

All these movements have roots in Switzerland as well as abroad, and all find their expression in graphic art. That new ideas are often adopted with some reluctance, and have continually to be tested, is fully in keeping with the temperament of our artists and our national characteristics.

ERWIN GRADMANN

# CATALOGUE

## RENÉ AUBERJONOIS

Born in 1872 at Jouxtens-Mézery, near Lausanne, he studied at the Kensington School of Art in 1896, and worked in the studios of Luc Olivier Merson and Whistler from 1897 onwards. In 1900 he went to Florence, and then returned to Paris where he worked until the outbreak of war. After 1914 he lived mainly in Lausanne. He designed scenery and costumes for the theatre.

1. WOMAN WITH CHILDREN 1940 *Lithograph* 13 × 9¾ ins

## MAURICE BARRAUD

Born in 1889 at Geneva, he became a pupil of the painter Pignolat. Thereafter he worked independently and travelled widely. His works include pictures of women, landscapes and large murals. Some of the latter can be seen in the station at Lucerne, the Palais des Nations at Geneva, and the Bundesbriefarchiv in Schwyz.

2. EUROPA 1942 *Etching* 13⅜ × 10½ ins

## MAX BILL

Born in Winterthur in 1908, he studied at the Bauhaus, Dessau, between 1927 and 1929. After 1929 he worked in Zürich as architect, painter, modeller and graphic artist. Since 1940 he has published articles in Swiss and foreign newspapers and periodicals on 'Art in Concrete' as practised by himself and his friends. In 1951 he was appointed to build and later to direct the High School for modelling at Ulm. In the same year he received the prize for sculpture at the first International Art Biennial at Sao Paulo.

3. FIFTEEN VARIATIONS ON THE SAME THEME
1935-38 *Colour Lithographs. Portfolio* 11⅜ × 12½ ins.

## ALEXANDRE BLANCHET

Born in 1882 at Pforzheim. His murals can be seen in the Bundesgerichte building in Lausanne and in the church at Tavanne, Canton Berne.

4. SEATED GIRL 1924 *Lithograph* 17¼ × 12 ins

## PAUL BODMER

Born in Zürich in 1886 and apprenticed to a scene-painter for three years, after which he continued his training independently. His work

combines formal stylisation with realism in detail. He has painted murals in the 'aula' of Zürich University and in Reformed churches.

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| 5. BOY AND GIRL | 1923 | *Pencil* | $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ ins |
| 6. WOMAN AMONGST TREES | 1929 | *Lithograph* | $12 \times 9$ ins |

SERGE BRIGNONI

Born at Chiasso in 1903. From 1923 to 1940 he lived and worked in Paris where, at first, he came under the influence of Picasso, but later became surrealist.

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| 7. NIGHT ON THE EQUATOR | 1949 | *Etching* | $10 \times 13\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| 8. NIGHT | 1949 | *Etching* | $6\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ ins |

EMIL BURKI

Born in Zürich in 1894, he was self-taught, and his works disclose genuine naïvety. He drew for advertisements, illustrated books, and also worked on 'Nebelspalter', a satirical newspaper. He died at Zürich in 1952.

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| 9. HORSE TORMENTED BY FLIES | 1950 | *Colour woodcut* | $21\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$ ins |

ALOIS CARIGIET

Born in 1902. He taught painting and acquired technical skill in graphic art at an advertising institute. His works include posters, stage décor, book illustrations and murals. By choice he paints mountain landscape.

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| 10. TIMBER-SLEDGE | 1944 | *Pen* | $20 \times 26\frac{1}{2}$ ins |

COGHUF (pseudonym for ERNST STOCKER)

Born in 1905 at Basle. In 1926, while he was working as a locksmith in Paris he decided to become a painter. He has executed several murals in Basle. In 1929 he went to live in the harsh lonely Jura country, where he paints vigorous colourful canvases.

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| 11. VEGETATION | 1943 | *Pen and wash* | $26\frac{1}{4} \times 19\frac{1}{2}$ ins |

OSKAR DALVIT

Born in 1911 at Zürich, where he taught and practised graphic art. Between 1936 and 1939 he travelled and studied in Italy, Paris and Berlin, and was much influenced by Franz Marc. He has always been an adherent of non-figurative painting and his interest lies in well-balanced compositions of form and colour.

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| 12. 39E BLUE-BLACK | 1949 | *Colour woodcut* | $17\frac{1}{2} \times 12$ ins |
| 13. 25E OCHRE-BLACK | 1951 | *Colour woodcut* | $13\frac{1}{4} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ ins |

GEORGES DESSOUSLAVY

Born at La Chaux-de-Fonds in 1898. He painted murals in the

station at Neuenburg between 1937 and 1939, in the Air Force Barracks at Payerne in 1944, and at the station at La Chaud-de-Fonds in 1947. He also worked as an illustrator. He died at Yverdon in 1952.

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| 14. IN THE FACTORY | 1951 | *Lithograph* | $14\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ ins |

IGNAZ EPPER

Born in 1892 at St. Gallen, he trained at the polytechnic there as a designer of needlework. He first worked in Zürich as an illustrator and commercial artist, then in Ancona as a water-colourist. His expressionist art is realised in a personal woodcut technique.

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| 15. STAIRCASE | 1925 | *Woodcut* | $19\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| 16. BLIND ACCORDIONIST | | *Colour woodcut* | $23 \times 18\frac{1}{4}$ ins |

HANS ERNI

Born in 1909. In 1928 and 1929 he studied at the Académie Julian in Paris, and from 1929 to 1930 at the United States School for Free and Applied Art in Berlin. He joined the 'Abstraction-Création' Group and was associated with Arp, Brancusi, Kandinsky and others with whom he exhibited. In 1936 he went to Italy to study the antique. He became known to the Swiss public by his posters and by a mural which was exhibited in the Schweizerischen Landesaustellung in Zürich in 1939.

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| 17. FIGURE COMPOSITION | 1941 | *Ink* | $23\frac{1}{2} \times 33\frac{3}{4}$ ins |
| 18. SELF-PORTRAIT | 1946 | *Etching* | $10\frac{3}{4} \times 8$ ins |
| 19. THE RAPE OF EUROPA | 1951 | *Colour Lithograph* | $25 \times 19$ ins |

HANS FISCHER

Born in 1909 in Berne, he studied at the Académie Fernand Léger in Paris (1933). His work includes murals, stage décor, commercial drawings, caricatures, designs for embroidery and book illustrations. His drawings combine fantasy with decorative elegance, and show a technical mastery in his use of lithographic stone as a medium for engraving.

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| 20. 'URNÄSCHER KLÄUSE' | 1949 | *Lithograph* | $11\frac{1}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| 21. 'LES MONSTRES MERVEILLEUX' | 1950 | *Stone-engraving* | $14\frac{1}{2} \times 20\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| 22. THE BIG FISH | 1950 | *Stone-engraving* | $12\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| 23. MEADOW FLOWERS | 1951 | *Stone-engraving* | $13\frac{3}{4} \times 19\frac{1}{2}$ ins |

EUGEN FRÜH

Born in 1914 at St. Gallen. His work consists chiefly of easel pic-

tures and large figure compositions, but he also produces murals and book illustrations.

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| 24. MARIETTA | 1948 | *Lithograph* | 10½ × 11 ins |

KARL GEISER

Born in 1898 in Berne. His reliefs and sculpture decorate public buildings and squares in Berne, Winterthur and Zürich. In his drawings, as in his plastic work, he seeks to achieve simplicity and compactness of form.

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| 25. PORTRAIT OF A BOY | 1930 | *Etching* | 6¼ × 4¾ ins |
| 26. BOY ON A STOOL | 1931 | *Etching* | 10½ × 7½ ins |

HERMANN HUBER

Born in 1888 the son of a Zürich calligrapher. In 1909 he assisted the Beuron monk, Wilibrord Verkade, who was painting murals in Jerusalem. Huber has executed a number of murals in public buildings.

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| 27. MOTHER AND BOY AT A TABLE | 1920 | *Pen* | 20¼ × 19½ ins |

KARL HÜGIN

Born in 1887 at Trimbach, Canton Solothurn. With Paul Bodmer and Hermann Huber he was employed to decorate the university buildings at Zürich. He also studied in Berlin (1919) and Marseilles and Tunis (1922). Since 1915 he has produced innumerable engravings, and has executed murals and mosaics in kindergartens, schools and factories, and in the League of Nations building, Geneva.

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| 28. TWO WOMEN | 1940 | *Etching* | 9¾ × 6⅛ ins |

CHARLES HUG

Born in 1899 at St. Gallen. He worked for the publishing firm Bruno Cassirer in Berlin, and in 1925 for the Illustrated Press in Paris. During the second World War he made use of his drawings as propaganda against Nazi ideas and to help emigrants and refugees.

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| 29. REFUGEES | 1940 | *Etching* | 10¾ × 8¼ ins |

MAX HUNZIKER

Born in 1901 in Zürich and self-taught. He studied and worked in Italy and France. The subjects of his pictures, prints and paintings on glass are often religious.

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| 30. MAN WITH LANTERN | 1948 | *Lithograph* | 24 × 19 ins |
| 31. THE JUG | 1949 | *Etching* | 12¾ × 19½ ins |
| 32. GOING HOME | 1950 | *Etching* | 23½ × 17½ ins |
| 33. Title page from DER CHERUBINISCHE WANDERSMANN by Angelus Silesius | 1950 | *Lithograph* | 19 × 24½ ins |

## PAUL KLEE

Born in 1879, he studied with Knirr and Stuck at Munich (1898-1901), and spent some time in Rome and Paris, returning to Munich in 1906. In 1912 he joined Kandinsky, Marc and others belonging to the circle of artists known as the 'Blaue Reiter'. In 1914 he visited Tunis, and from 1916-1918 served in the German army. In 1920 he became an instructor at the Bauhaus, Dessau, and in 1931 a professor at the Dusseldorf Academy of Art. In 1933 he moved to Berne, and died at Locarno in 1940.

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| 34. STATION | 1911 | *Etching* | $5\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ ins |
| 35. THE WITCH WITH THE COMB | 1922 | *Lithograph* | $12\frac{3}{4} \times 9$ ins |
| 36. TIGHT-ROPE DANCER | 1923 | *Lithograph* | $17 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| 37. HEAD | 1925 | *Lithograph* | $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ ins |
| 38. THE COMIC-OPERA SINGER | 1925 | *Lithograph* | $20 \times 14$ ins |
| 39. 'HÖHE' | 1928 | *Etching* | $9 \times 9$ ins |
| 40. OLD MAN RECKONING | 1929 | *Etching* | $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ ins |
| 41. GROUP OF FIGURES | 1927 | *Pen* | $13\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{1}{4}$ ins |
| 42. THE PRICKLY CLOWN | 1931 | *Etching* | $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ ins |

## MAX VON MÜHLENEN

Born in Berne in 1903. He lived in Paris between 1924 and 1938 and studied at the Académie Julian and under André Lhote. He has painted the ceilings of the Tiergarten Restaurant, Dählhölzli.

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| 43. TREES AND BRIDGE | 1950 | *Pen* | $18 \times 24$ ins |

## FRITZ PAULI

Born in 1891 in Berne, he studied under Albert Weltis and Peter Halms. After many years of wandering he settled in the Ticino. He is chiefly known as an engraver, but since 1951 he has been painting, his most recent works being religious murals in the Antoniehaus, Basle. His graphic style, at first romantic, now has an expressionist force, and his large compositions have a tragic and often visionary quality.

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| 44. PORTRAIT OF DR. W. WARTMANN | 1923 | *Etching* | $21 \times 14\frac{1}{2}$ ins |
| 45. MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE | 1924 | *Etching* | $22 \times 19\frac{3}{4}$ ins |
| 46. 'DIE TOTENKAMMER' | 1930 | *Etching* | $21 \times 24\frac{1}{2}$ ins |

## ERNST GEORG RÜEGG

Born in 1883, the son of a Swiss silk manufacturer in Milan. He lived in the Upper Rhine district, amongst unpretentious farming communities. His works, chiefly pastoral, include a number of paintings and murals, innumerable graphic works, book illustra-

tions, and children's books. He died at Männedorf, Canton Zürich, in 1948.

47. PASTORAL — 1918 — *Etching* — 8 × 10¼ ins

## JOHANN ROBERT SCHÜRCH

Born at Aarau in 1895, he spent a considerable period as a casual labourer and poster painter. He worked mainly at night and was almost exclusively a draughtsman. In his pictures he took the darker side of life as his subject, and represented what he called the 'homelessness of the period'. He died at Ancona in 1941.

48. DEATH-SCENE — 1929 — *Pen and wash* — 7¾ × 10 ins
49. MOTHER WITH TWO CHILDREN — 1931 — *Pen and wash* — 10½ × 8¾ ins

## VICTOR SURBEK

Born in 1885 at Zäziwil, Canton Berne, he studied in Paris in 1910. He is well-known for his paintings of the Alps and of the Bernese Mittelland, and for his portraits. He has painted murals on the Zeitglockenturm and in a school in Berne, where he lives and works.

50. EMMENTHAL LANDSCAPE — 1949 — *Lithograph* — 9¾ × 14¾ ins

## MAX TRUNINGER

Born at Winterthur in 1910. He has painted murals in the welfare wing of a factory and on a stairway in the Kantonsspital, Zürich. His paintings and lithographs are influenced by his large-scale vision as a mural artist.

51. ACCORDIONIST — 1951 — *Lithograph* — 22 × 16½ ins
52. SABINE — 1951 — *Lithograph* — 20½ × 13 ins
53. BOY WITH CAT — 1951 — *Lithograph* — 8 × 13 ins

## KARL WALSER

Born in 1877 at Biel and studied at the art school at Strassburg in 1895. In Berlin he executed many commissions for murals and was associated with Max Reinhart's stage productions. He returned to Switzerland in 1917 and worked mainly on murals in official buildings in Zürich, in the Rathaus and Stadttheater in Berne and in private houses. He also produced book illustrations and a few lithographs. He died in Berne in 1943.

54. CHILDREN WITH A LAMB — 1930 — *Ink* — 14⅛ × 14⅛ ins
55. PASTORAL — 1939 — *Lithograph* — 9¾ × 13¼ ins

## ROBERT WYSS

Born in 1925 at Lucerne.

56. GIRL AT HER TOILET — 1952 — *Woodcut* — 19½ × 14½ ins

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